

## **ANTIGUA& BARBUADA CUSTOMS**

### **Greetings:**

Most Antiguan address friends by first name or nickname, often taken from a middle name or a defining physical characteristic.

Children and young people address their elders and relatives with *aunt*, *uncle*, or an appropriate familial title.

A man waits for a woman to extend her hand before shaking it.

### **Gestures:**

Antiguans generally are lively and expressive among friends. A conversation may include a person acting out or demonstrating something with body gestures.

Hand and facial gestures punctuate conversation and often express something better than words can.

Raising the hand, palm out, and wagging an extended index finger from side to side indicates disagreement. It is usually accompanied with *No, no, no*. A hearty “thumbs up” means things are going well.

Sucking air through the teeth is called *chups* or *choops* and expresses exasperation or annoyance (at a flat tire or the store being out of bread, for example).

Often, a mild *chups* provokes laughter and is a good release of tension. However, when directed at an individual, the noise is very rude. People do not like to hear their names called out in public, so a discreet “pssst” is often used to get someone's attention.

### **Holidays:**

Old Year's Night (31 Dec.) and New Year's Day (1 Jan.) cap off the important Christmas season, which is marked by religious and secular celebrations. Easter (Friday–Monday) is as significant as Christmas. Labour Day (technically 1 May, but observed the first Monday in May) is important because of the role labor unions had in gaining national independence.

Pentecost (50 days after Easter) is a time of spiritual renewal and also coincides with Barbuda's *Caribana* (Carnival). CARICOM Day (4 July) celebrates Caribbean unity. During Antigua's Carnival and national arts festival, emancipation from slavery (1 Aug.) is celebrated. Street dancing at dawn the next day (called *J'Ouvert*) celebrates the first morning of freedom from slavery. Christmas is celebrated on 25 and 26 December.

The 26th is Boxing Day, which comes from the old British tradition of giving servants a holiday and boxed gifts. It is now a day to relax and visit.